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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

ISSUED BY DIRECTION AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

For free distribution to members. The T. S. in America is not responsible for any statements herein. Published by the Theosophical Society in America, at 35 Nassau Street, New York City.
A. H. SPENCER, Acting President.

Each member is invited to send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members should be careful to write distinctly and on one side of the paper only.

In sending questions, or answers to questions, whenever an assertion is made that such and such is a "teaching" or that "it is said in Theosophical literature," and the like, the name of author, article, volume, and page referred to must be given.

All communications should be addressed to **The Editor, Theosophical Forum, Room 1411, 35 Nassau Street, New York City.**

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION 108. (*Continued*)

Is autonomy necessary in T. S. If so; why?

William Main.—"Autonomy" means self-government. This does not mean that the self-governing body must establish a universe of its own, be disconnected from, and, in that sense, independent of all others. This would be impossible. But it does mean that it is to adjust its own internal affairs without interference, and also its relations to others, so far as it can do so without interfering with the natural rights of others.

Autonomy may be surrendered to a greater or less extent but the autonomous unit is morally, and often legally, responsible for such surrender, which may be wise or foolish, according to circumstances, and should never be made without careful consideration.

Thus: a man may enlist in an army but he should first carefully consider whether, regarding himself simply as a unit in the social organism, this surrender of his liberty will really benefit the whole.

It is often assumed that because an army may be an efficient instrument when under absolute control, the rule of an autocrat is best for the government of large bodies.

This may or may not be true. It depends upon what kind of work the body is to do; whether it is:

(a) comparatively simple, or of a nature which is already known, or can be accurately foreseen; or whether:

(b) it is highly complex and to be evolved in many diverse ways, the nature of which cannot be foreseen, but which must be developed by the individual workers as time goes on.

For the first of these the army plan may be a conspicuous success; for the last, it has invariably proved an equally conspicuous failure.

The work of an army is, for the most part, destructive; its constructive work, such as earthworks, military bridges, &c., is of the rudest nature, and for its weapons, clothing, &c., it is dependent upon the machinery, skill and industry, developed in the evolution of the peaceful arts, by autonomous artisans and associations, which, while necessarily *inter*dependent in the complex social organism, are most active and progressive when freed from the chilling influence of absolutism. Civilized men, when united into an army, are vastly *less* efficient and productive, for all higher purposes, than these same men are as citizens of a republic. As citizens they are part of a highly complex and productive mechanism; as soldiers they cease to be productive and progressive and are welded together into a mere club, which may be wielded efficiently or not, and has its sole justification for existence in the necessity of protecting the autonomy of the rest of the social organism.

Under which form of government will the T. S. be most useful? As an autonomous association, or, under autocratic rule?

That depends upon what it is expected to do. If it is to be a mere tool for the propagation of a special set of teachings, there is much to be said for autocratic rule; provided the proper autocrat is found. An advertising agent is a useful personage and must employ and rule over many subordinates.

If the autocrat is himself a source and center of wisdom; or, in other words, is both author and advertising agent, an army of servants for the distribution of wisdom might be most efficient.

This is the theory upon which both the Salvation Army and the Roman Catholic Church are organized. The Salvation Army is based upon a feeling of certainty in the inspiration of the Bible, and of certain interpretations of it. The autocratic form of this organization is adopted because logical and convenient. Nothing new is to be evolved. That which is advertised is old, of standard quality, and needing only public attention and constant reiteration.

The position of the Roman Church is but slightly different, although its methods are carried out upon a larger scale and are more sure and sedate. The chief agent, or "vicegerent" professes to be in constant touch with the —— (pardon me) —— with that which he represents, and to be able to make certain modifications of terms in the territory which he controls.

These organizations have grown up on the basis of teachings which undoubtedly contain much profound truth, and they are also the visible representatives of certain cravings and tendencies of average human nature. Joining the T. S. does not alter these tendencies and we must expect that a very large portion of those who have joined will drift toward autocratic rule and either carry the T. S. with them, or break loose for the purpose of satisfying their impulses.

A society so organized may endure, and, if so, will take its place along with many others of similar nature; and like them will do both good and evil.

Autocratic rule is essentially based upon that which is supposed to be finished, or something which is known to and transmitted through the autocratic center. The governed body is used as a tool, and may be most efficient for certain limited purposes; but, as in the case of the army, or the church organizations, the system is not adapted to the developments of new arts or the discovery of new truths.

For an example of rapid development in these lines we must turn to the most autonomous and democratic of all organizations; viz, the scientific societies. These have been based upon principles corresponding precisely to those of the T. S. Few scientific societies require, in a candidate for membership, more than an intelligent interest in the line of knowledge which they are intended to promote. No one joining such a society is ever required to express a belief in any particular theory or law. Such societies are based:

First; on a certain community, or brotherhood, of interest. This is expressed in:

Second; the study and collation of the recorded efforts and advances made by others in the special field chosen; and:

Third; in further research and comparison of results.

Is not this a precise parallel to the three objects of the Theosophical Society?

These societies are invariably autonomous; their officers are changed from time to time, and the real leaders are recognized and honored as such, by virtue of real industry or genius, and not from

any office which they, with others, may transiently hold. The records of these societies, in the different countries of the world, are freely interchanged. The nomenclature, so far as possible, is put in a common language. Visitors whether foreign members, or simply interested strangers, are made welcome. Museums, libraries and public lectures are provided, as a rule without profit and as the result of great personal sacrifice by the members and others who may aid them. This spontaneous and autonomous co-operation in the search for truth and in devoting it to the welfare of humanity, has resulted in unprecedented progress in different lines of knowledge and in discoveries which have done more within three generations to link humanity together than all the merely abstract speculation of the last ten thousand years.

The rule of an autocrat, however wise, in chemistry, physics, or astronomy, would have chilled and paralyzed this natural growth. He might have organized the whole and proclaimed that it was a "well made tool," but a tool must be wielded by a single will, and, so far as it is a tool, it is a dead thing and not a living, sensitive and evolving organism, reaching out in all directions and typical of the true brotherhood of man.

If so much has been accomplished for the brotherhood of humanity by the autonomous system even within the lines of special material research, what may it not acomplish when applied to those subjects which profoundly interest us all?

The Theosophical Society was organized on broad and simple principles, identical with those upon which, as shown by experience, the most rapid progress can be made. It was the first really powerful and comprehensive effort in modern times to bring religious thought upon a basis of life and expansion. H. P. B. started it, not with a body of dogmas, but with a wonderful nucleus for future thought and investigation. It was inevitable however that latent hereditary tendencies should assert themselves.

The advocates of the system of single and central power are fond of pointing to the rigid army system. Let them compare the results of the centrally ruled and destructive armies of war, with those attained by the spontaneously grouped and governed armies of peace.

We have heard much of "forces" let loose. So there are. They are real, and you will find them at miracle-working shrines, at Methodist camp meetings and at Theosophic "revival" meetings. They may at times be centered upon a living person, or even upon an inanimate object.

In this connection we have been warned against the operations of the "brain mind."

The "True Church" never had any use for the "brain mind."

We have had mysterious intimations that "the time has now come" for the descent of "Initiate Rulers," "Adept Kings," &c.

The time for these beings was in that "Golden Age," long past, in the childhood or kindergarten of humanity. We are in the "Iron Age" of manhood, when through self-government and in the sweat of our brows and through many errors we must earn the bread of knowledge. When, in some distant age, all men shall have approached, or reached, that stage which we now call adeptship, we may believe that the simple forms of government will be administerd by those who will be chosen as worthy and well qualified, even in that exalted community.

Whatever we may think of these things, let us recognize the fact that there must be honest differences of opinion, and different lines of action. It is not necessary to attribute petty or evil motives, nor to lie awake o' nights imagining "plots" or the circumvention thereof.

G. E. Harter.—Yes, unqualifiedly. Without free-will, without the liberty to chose and to act, there can be no individuality; without individuality, no progress; without individuality, no re-incarnation. An automaton has no autonomy. It has no individuality. It has no responsibility. It is not an ENS. Without autonomy there can be no volition. Without volition no WILL. Without will, results of acts cannot react upon the actor, but upon the performer, the master who pulls the strings. Autonomy, individuality, Self-ness are necessary to progress, to continued individual existence. Without individuality, the purpose of reincarnation fails of accomplishment.

Edward Alden.—In this land and age autonomy is an absolute prerequisite to the practical growth of any society. An association of whatever kind that does not govern itself, cannot attract to it a solitary adherent from a self-respecting American public. An intelligence that will consent to submit to any authority other than a majority of its associates, stultifies itself, and is of little value either to itself or to others. Submission to exterior authority is so foreign to American habit of thought, that a Society espousing such a principle of government would not only fail to reach the ear of this people, but would surely repel all attention to or consideration for its other purposes from the general public. The T. S. seeks to im-

press upon the world a philosophy of life, that is startling to the preconceived ideas of this hemisphere, regarding the derivation and evolution of man; it believes that organization is a necessary adjunct to a successful promulgation of this philosophy; it would be suicidal to its purpose to require in its constitution submission to any authority whatsoever from those whom it seeks to attract to its ranks.

M. H. Phelps.—The fundamental error from which confusion of mind arises on this subject, is misconception of the function of the Theosophical Society. That function hitherto—whatever it may be in the future—has been principally *the training and discipline of its members;* not the enlightenment of the world. All occult processes are of the same nature. Their aim is the development of the few; because only the few are ready. Because also, particularly in this case, the continued vitality of the organization requires a nucleus, even though it be small, of relatively strong and self-reliant men.

Autonomous action is desirable in every stage of evolution; but in the present human stage, it is vital and essential. For now we have to do with the evolution of the *mind and will.* The physical body evolves automatically; but the mind can evolve only by the exercise of free choice.

In freedom of thought and action, in absence of dogma, the T. S. is unique among similar human institutions; and it is so in order to furnish the required free training ground for the development of the mind. The single tenet which it holds—Universal Brotherhood—is vitally opposed to the domination of any mind or will. It is merely a simple and brief expression of the spiritual identity of all creatures. This belief precludes the assertion of authority. It is the duty of every man who holds it to cast himself for guidance upon the one Spirit of which he is a part. No other soul can intervene, or transmit to him his light. Thus only can he grow. Universal Brotherhood means *freedom of souls.*

No human being is worth a rush unless he acts from his own center. The T. S. will be an effective instrument for the elevation of humanity only so far as it is made up of trained and disciplined units, acting harmoniously, *but independently.* The T. S. was intended to be governed by its *collective mind;* that each individual mind, brought often to the test of action, should grow. The same principles permeate the society as the human organism. If one organ overbalances the others—be it the heart or any other—the result is destruction alike to the organism and the other organs.

There is another consideration equally conclusive to any one familiar with the history and genius of the T. S. If the responsibility of all is to be carried by a single person, manifestly there is an end of personal tests of character; and we all should know that the history of the T. S. has been a history of such tests.

Under H. P. B. the crux was loyalty to a teacher; under W. Q. J., the application to practical affairs of the fundamental principle of Brotherhood; and in the present crisis the burning question is, is it sufficient *to be right*, though we have to face the Great Law alone? Or must we have, *at whatever sacrifice of principle and character*, the protecting wing of an "Avatar?" Have we the courage of our convictions, or are we cowards? Is there any one who understands this noble philosophy and believes it to be true, who can hesitate in his decision?

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION.

FOR THE USE OF BRANCHES.

The following subjects are supplied as being suitable for discussion at branch meetings. They are by various students who have had experience in conducting such meetings. It should be clearly understood that statements made herein are *suggestions for discussion*, are not official, nor in any way authoritative. Similar outlines will be gladly received by the editor, who reserves the right to make such alterations in their construction as may seem advisable.—EDITOR.

CHELAS OR DISCIPLES.

What is a chela? What is the difference between a chela and a student? A chela and a lay-chela? Should we wish to be chelas? If so, why? If not, why not? How to become a chela? Can one be helped to become a chela, or must one do everything for oneself? Do the Masters make chelas? What degree of spiritual growth is necessary before one can be a chela? How should this be striven for? What are the requisites for chelaship as generally expressed? Why is something more than mere "goodness" necessary? What is this something? Chelaship attained by "rising to the plane of the Masters." What is the difference between conscious and unconscious chelaship? Is it possible to be a chela and live in the world? Is there an external form of initiation in connection with chelaship?

REFERENCES.

Letters that have helped me. Man: Fragments of Forgotten History. Light on the Path. Five Years of Theosophy. Articles in Path and Lucifer by H. P. B. and W. Q. J.

REINCARNATION.

The second fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*. Is it universal? Reincarnation as applied to the seven principles of man.

1. Physical Body: molecular reincarnation and the re-embodiment of the cell. This as a geometrical process.

2. Astral Body. Re-embodiment of atomic centers, sometimes called elementals. Occasional reincarnation of an old astral.

3. Life or Prana. Its re-embodiment under cyclic law. Compare mummification among ancient Egyptians. The centripetal force controlling all substances.

4. Man of Desire. Reappearance of desires and tendencies, which become habitual.

5. Mind. Reincarnation of soul, aspiration and the higher mental characteristics.

6 and 7. Spiritual soul and spirit. Its reincarnation during manifestation as the soul of the Universe. The Devachan of this Monad is the Pralaya of the Universe.

REFERENCES.

Secret Doctrine. Culture of Concentration, by W. Q. J. Law of Cycles, by W. Q. J.

WHAT THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY HAS TO FEAR.

What are the chief influences opposed to the success of the T. S.? (a,) social opposition. (b,) spirit of the age. (c,) scientific opposition. (d,) newspapers. (e,) dogmatic religions. Are any of these to be feared? Why not?

The chief dangers are from within: (a,) dogmatism. (b,) superstition. (c,) narrow-mindedness of its own members. How are these dangers to be avoided? The value of autonomy as a safeguard. How dogmatism would destroy the society as shown by church history. The duty of each member of the society in this respect. Freedom of speech and toleration of each other's opinions as safe-guards. Wisdom of the founders of the society in foreseeing these dangers and providing the remedies.

REFERENCES.

Key to Theosophy. Conclusion, p.p. 304-305.

CHRISTIANITY.

Its foundation and early evolution. The purity of its origin. Its gradual decay owing to the ascendency of the priests. How this influence worked for evil. The exoteric and esoteric explanations of Christianity. Its mystic side. Its indebtedness to Egypt and Greece for its Gnostic and philosophic basis. Rise of the Popes. Its spiritual degeneration and intellectual revival at the time of the reformation. Has the world benefited by Christianity? Its faults and its virtues. The legend of the Christ and its correspondence in man. Theosophic explanation of miracles. Of the parables. Does the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount correspond with the teachings of Theosophy?

REFERENCES.

Priest and People, by E. T. Hargrove. "Esoteric Basis of Christianity," by H. P. B. in Lucifer. Ocean of Theosophy, by W. Q. J.

THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND WORK.

We regret to state that through some misapprehension we included the names of the Chelmsford and Louisville Branches in the list of the Branches remaining faithful to the organization published in the last FORUM.

LEGAL NEWS.

Members have already been sent a copy of the summons and complaint which has been served upon Mrs. Tingley and Mr. Neresheimer in the suit to recover the records, archives, and other property of the T. S. A.

The matter came before the Supreme Court of the State of New York, on the 15th of March when an injunction was obtained, as follows:

"It is ordered that Katherine A. Tingley and E. August Neresheimer, the above named defendants, their agents and servants be and they are hereby enjoined and restrained from disposing of or using or in any way interfering with the personal property described in the complaint of this action, or any part thereof, except to turn over the same to the said plaintiff, or to a receiver to be appointed by the Court in said action until the further order of the Court."

It was further ordered that the defendants show cause on the 23d of March why this injunction should not be made permanent.

The case came before Court on the 23rd but was postponed three days. On Saturday the 26th the case was heard, and affidavits were handed in. The Judge reserved his decision and at the date of going to press has not yet handed it down.

The most important facts brought out by the case are contained in the following "Memo. for Plaintiff" prepared by Mr. Spencer's attorneys after seeing the defense put up by Mrs. Tingley and Mr. Neresheimer. The whole paper is not given.

"The only ground on which the claim of the plaintiff could be resisted is that the proceedings of the Convention of Feb. 18th were regular. It is distinctly admitted in the defendant's answer as well as in the defendant's opposing affidavits that the entire proceedings of that convention were absolutely void in so far as the same purported to effect alterations in the constitution of the T. S. A. * * * * * * * * It is not pretended that the defendants are acting under color of any right except that derived from an admittedly irregular and invalid act taken by the convention referred to. Whether the plaintiff is to be regarded as entitled to maintain the action as an officer of the T. S. A. or not is not of controlling importance. His membership in the Society entitles him to invoke the arm of the Court in preventing a misappropriation of any of the property of the Society. The papers show most distinctly that the defendant Neresheimer and three members of the Executive Committee not only openly aided and abetted the movement having for its object the destruction of the T. S. A. but have promoted in every way the attempted diversion or misappropriation of the property of that Society. It is submitted that the defendants cannot be heard to allege in one breath that they are entitled to retain their offices and that they have combined with others in effecting the abolition of those very offices. While admitting that the requisite notice of an intended alteration of the constitution was not given, they allege that the act of the convention was valid and that although the holding of the validity of the action in question would deprive them of their offices, they are still to be considered as officers of the Society. It is difficult to see by what process of reasoning the Court could be asked to hold that the defendant Neresheimer and his associates on the Executive Committee, Pierce, Patterson and Anderson, are to be regarded as not having absolutely vacated and abdicated their offices; they certainly left no stone unturned to deprive themselves of whatever office they may previously have held.

There is no denial by the defendant Neresheimer that he is controlled absolutely by the defendant Tingley. The statement that it is not true that he is so controlled "except as provided by the constitution of the said Universal Brotherhood" is not only no denial at all, but is a distinct admission of the charge; for on referring to the constitution "of the said Universal Brotherhood" it will be

noted that the most absolute submission to the will and direction of the said Tingley is obligatory on the said defendant. He could not deny the charge in view of his having pledged himself in the following terms :

'I pledge myself to support the present Outer Head (the defendant Katherine A. Tingley) and the one she may appoint as her successor, and in particular to obey without cavil or delay the orders of the Outer Head of this Lodge in all that concerns my relation with this work for Universal Brotherhood, * * to all of which I pledge my most sacred word of honor.' "

The denials of the defense cover about forty pages of print. A large portion is wholly irrelevant and is employed in an attempt to deny the plaintiff's contentions. Perhaps the most important thing in all the papers is the admission referred to above, to wit, that the proceedings at the Chicago convention were contrary to the provisions of the constitution. This one admission is of sufficient value to justify the cost of the legal proceedings, and more than justifies the position maintained.

It is of comparatively small moment whether the Court decides the injunction hearing in our favor, as this does not settle the case and is only a question of law. The main issue will be the trial before the jury which will occur as soon as the lawyers can have the case reached, and it is hardly conceivable that any American jury would give the property of T. S. A. into Mrs. Tingley's keeping after reading the Constitution of "Universal Brotherhood."

The following resolutions passed by the Indianapolis Branch of Indianapolis, Ind., are so admirable in form and context, that we print them in full although they have been already quite widely distributed.

Resolved : 1. That the Theosophical Society in America is, always has been, and always should be an autonomous, independent and self-governing organization.

Resolved : 2. That in the Society as in the nation, the source of all authority is in the membership, and the American principle of government of the people, by the people and for the people, should prevail. The rightful government of this Society has always been and should always remain a government of the members, by the members, and for the members.

Resolved : 3. That the membership of the Society having duly accepted and ordained as its organic law the constitution which was adopted at Boston in 1895, that instrument limits and bounds the powers of any convention composed of delegates elected pursuant to its provisions. That constitution prescribes the manner in which it may be amended or changed, and recognizes the absolute and unqualified right of all members to be fully informed of every such proposed change or amendment, and to be heard in relation thereto through their duly chosen delegates.

Resolved : 4. That the convention which met at Handel Hall, in Chicago, February 18, 1898, being composed of delegates chosen under and by virtue of that constitution, had no legal existence or power to act, except as such existence and power were derived therefrom. No notice having been given of any proposed change or amendment to the constitution, that convention had no power to make any. Any action taken by that convention, in violation of the constitution, is void and of no effect.

Resolved : 5. That as that convention existed as a legally organized body only by virtue of the constitution of the Society it had no power to destroy the Society, or to destroy or abrogate its constitution; nor had it the right or power

to transform the Society from an independent, autonomous organization into a mere literary adjunct to another organization.

And especially do we deny that it had the right or power to take from the members all right of self-government, and make them mere voiceless puppets.

The denial to delegates upon the floor of the convention, of all right to plead for its life, was in direct violation of the principles of tolerance and Universal Brotherhood professed by the Society.

Resolved: 6. That government by an absolute and autocratic ruler, who is made responsible to no authority, is incompatible with the spirit of the age. It is an anachronism, having no place in the closing years of the nineteenth century. It is a lapse toward barbarism. Its tendency would be to check the growing consciousness of individual responsibility, and to retard development, both spiritually and mentally.

Resolved: 7. That the action taken at Chicago, in attempting to destroy the Theosophical Society in America, being in violation of the constitution, and therefore void, the Society still exists, and we hereby renew our allegiance to it.

FOREIGN NEWS.

A LETTER FROM DR. HARTMANN.

THE FREEDOM OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

AN EXPLANATION.

"In a great movement like this no one should expect to find his associates all congenial, instructive, prudent and courageous. One of the first proofs of self mastery is when one shows that he can be kind and forbearing and genial with companions of the most dissimilar character and temperaments. One of the strongest signs of retrogression when one shows that he expects others to like what he likes and act as he acts."

Extract from the letter of a Master received at Adyar, Jan. 12, 1885.

I have never desired to meddle with the internal affairs in any Society, nor to pose as a "leader," and my voluntary and prompt resignation of the presidency of the T. S. in E. (Germany) after my discovery that the spirit of intolerence prevailed therein, goes to show that I am not wishing to occupy any official position; but on a certain occasion in Adyar which those, who were then present, will remember, I have solemnly promised to support the constitution of the T. S., in which it is said, that the T. S. as a whole is not bound to any creed, that it is a society of people, irrespective of religious belief and consequently free of all belief in any papal authority or clerical tyranny and that each member has to grant to every other member the same amount of tolerance, which he claims for himself. The freedom from dogma necessarily includes the freedom from enforced belief in the authority of any particular person, whose assertions have to be considered infallible; the freedom from spiritual tyranny and the exclusion of any dictator or autocrat in matters of faith.— I have, as I said, never desired to meddle with society matters, but as my silence would probably be mistaken for consent I am bound to express my opinion in view of the great stroke of policy performed by Mrs. Katherine A. Tingley, of New York, by which she has formed a new church of her own, usurped dominion over the so called T. S. in A. and E. etc., and made herself Pope, King and dictator in one.

When at the time of the unfortunate trial of W. Q. Judge, I stood upon the side of Mr. Judge; it was not—as many supposed—that I wanted to prove him innocent of writing occult letters, for whether or not he wrote such letters, was none of my business and had nothing to do with the constitution of the T. S. The reason why I stood by his side is that this trial involved the question of belief in

Mahatmaship as a dogma of the T. S. It was equivalent to a trial for heresy. The constitution of the T. S. prescribes no belief in adept and occult letters, while this trial was equivalent to an official assertion, that the existence of adepts is a dogma of the T. S. For this reason I took sides with those who, as I thought, could keep the constitution of the T. S. free from dogmatic belief, irrespectively of what each one might personally believe himself.

I have lectured on this freedom from blind faith, while I was in America. I have tried to explain what the principle of tolerance means, and that while everyone may individually believe what he pleases, it would be against the principle of freedom laid down in the constitution of the T. S., if we were to abandon the worship of *Tweedledee*, merely to put into his place *Tweedledum*. There were only few who understood what I meant by using this parable. There are a great many so foolish as to believe, when I say that the T. S. as a whole has no belief to enforce upon anybody, that I meant to imply that no member of the T. S. should be permitted to believe in any other authority but his own; in other words that he should doubt everybody and everything and only put faith in his own ignorance. This is very foolish.— The T. S. does not prescribe a creed or spiritual authority to anybody, nor does it prohibit anyone to believe in whatever authority he chooses to believe. The Roman Catholic members in the T. S. are free to recognize the pope in Rome as their infallible authority; the Jews in the T. S. are free to believe that the law of Moses is all that is required; the Buddhists are free to worship Buddha, the Turks to believe that Mahommed is the only prophet and so forth; and it would be entirely against the principle of tolerance as affirmed in the constitution of the T. S., if we were to deny to any member of the T. S. the right to join Mrs. Tingley's or any other church.

The adherents of Mrs. Tingley have the same right to worship a saint Judge, or the catholics to worship saint Peter. The followers of the Maharaja-sect in India have the undisputed right to drink the contents of the bathing-tub of their "gurus," who claim to be the direct descendants of Krishna; but to attempt to impose the faith in the authority of the person in which one believes himself, upon the whole T. S. is an attempt upon the very life of the T. S. and in direct antagonism to the constitution, which says that every member has to grant to every other member the same amount of authority, which he claims for himself.

There are very few people in the world, who have attained that amount of spiritual self knowledge, which constitutes a real *Theosophist*, and the vast majority of mankind have not yet awakened to a realization of what the word theosophy means. As long as a man has no real self-knowledge, he absolutely needs the knowledge of others for his support. For this reason churches with all their unavoidable consequences, as priestcraft, clericalism, and intolerence are a necessity of our times. Churches like other forms and organizations cannot be done away with, but must be outgrown. We therefore do not object to churches but we welcome them as guiding stars to a still higher light, and the more progressive and enlightened a church is, the more will it be welcome as a higher pathway to the realization of truth. If the new church of Mrs. Tingley is a better and more enlightened church than the already existing ones, we can only congratulate her on her success; but this is a matter, of which every individual must judge for himself and which can be decided only in the future; for "by their fruits ye shall know them." But if Mrs. Tingley fancies that the T. S. is to be incorporated as a part of her church—such an assertion is absurd and foolish and would go to show that she never knew, what the word "theosophy" means; for that which is free cannot be a part of that which is limited; Mrs. Tingley is herself an object in space, but she cannot put all space into her pocket.

As to the so-called T. S. in A. and E. having become absorbed in Mrs. Tingley's church—this does not interfere with the real T. S.—If that T. S. in A. and E. etc. had been ripe to grasp the true spirit of their own Constitution, they would have

maintained its freedom and left everyone who wanted to join Mrs. Tingley's church free to do so individually and on his own responsibility, but they would not have joined it officially as a whole. The fact that they bowed their necks under the subjugation of one person, only proves that they needed a ruler and that they were not free and not theosophists. Slaves must have a master; "only he who can be his own master needs to be nobody's servant" says Paracelsus. They have obtained what they deserved. Not the fact of their having chosen Mrs. Tingley as their leader—but the fact that they enforce that "leadership" and authority on pain of excommunication and ostracism upon everyone who does not submit to her "who must be obeyed," shows that they have become enemies of the fundamental principle of the Constitution of the T. S. and have therefore ceased to be members of it.

We will not enter upon an examination of the means which were taken by Mrs. Tingley and her associates to accomplish these results. The letters before us, privately written by Mr. B.... C.. ., S. C.... and others, in which orders are given as to how the public should be mystified and the members of the T. S. taken by surprise and in which every doubt about the Mahatmaship of Mrs. Tingley is put down as a deadly sin against the Holy Ghost, are a masterwork of jesuitism, but it is none of our business to trouble ourselves about the means which any church organism may use for obtaining power over the minds of the faithful and over their money; I only wish to state that the church of Mrs. Tingley never has been and is not now representing the real Theosophical Society, which has been established by H. P. Blavatsky, nor did the real W. Q. Judge ever resemble the caricature which the adherents of Mrs. Tingley have made of him and of which they have created an object of adulation and idolatry. If H. P. Blavatsky or Judge were living to-day they would immediately repudiate all connection with every new organization made for the purpose of obscuring and entangling the minds.—This is not said out of any spite or animosity against Mrs. Tingley or any other person. I have no animosity against any person and begrudge to Mrs. Tingley the power of her authority in her church no more than I begrudge the Pope in Rome his power in his congregation; but I can see no difference between the intolerance against all doubt of the Mahatmaship of Mrs. Tingley and that against the doubt of the infallibility of the Pope. In the old church heretics were burnt alive; in the new church they will probably be burnt. At the present they are only excommunicated, while at the same time the shouts of tolerance arise.—Let us wish that in the future all this religious intolerance will be exercised in the name of Mrs. Tingley's church, but not in the name of the Theosophical Society and Universal Brotherhood, for Universal Brotherhood, and Universal Tyranny are two incompatible things.

I do not doubt the good faith of those fanatics who believe that they are in possession of the only saving power and who want to convert everybody to what to others at least is only an opinion; but theosophy is "the light which shines in all things which are luminous" and the T. S. permits every member to seek for that which is luminous in his own religious system. Without this freedom of opinion and tolerance the T. S. would not differ from any other narrow denomination, of which each one believes itself to be the only tabernacle of truth.

Signed,

HALLEIN, AUSTRIA, March, 1898. DR. FRANZ HARTMANN.

The following Lodges and Centres have already notified their repudiation of the action of the recent Special Convention, and with members, centres and lodges, in England, who may decide to continue in the T. S. in Europe, constitute the Theosophical Society in Europe (Eng.)

Scarsborough,	124 Westborough,	Rowland Buxton.
Newcastle-on-Tyne,	106 Brighton Grove,	Jasper Fawcett.
Middlesboro,	28 Sussex Street,	G. J. Henderson.

Bow London,	Millfield House, Grove Crescent Rd, Shatford, E.	Howard H. Birt.
H. P. B. London,	78 Wigmore Street, W.	Richard Trood.
Bath,	2 Paragon.	Miss. M. K. Sweet.
Carlisle,	9 Eden Terrace.	Ihd. Muse.
York,	18 Pavement.	Edward I. H. Snowden.
Gateshead,	56 Whitehall Road,	Samuel Smith.
Colchester,	"Riverside" St. Osyth,	A. S. Went.
South Shields,	Westoe Village,	Mrs. Binks.

CHISWICK, LONDON, ENGLAND,
March 21st, 1898.

England.—The following resolutions were moved by R. A. V. Morris, seconded by Mrs. Blumenthal, and adopted by a majority of eleven to one, at the regular meeting of the West Middlesex Branch of the Theosophical Society in Europe, held on Sunday, March 20, 1898:

Whereas: At the recent convention of the Theosophical Society in Europe, a majority of the delegates present attempted to abrogate the Constitution of the Theosophical Society in Europe by amalgamating illegally and without any notice given with an autocratic organization,

And, Whereas, The Constitution of this autocratic organization is opposed to the fundamental principles of Theosophy which, above all things, insist on freedom of thought and the moral responsibility of individuals,

And, Whereas, This autogratic organization by creating the dogma of "leadership" shuts out from its ranks all those who cannot accept that dogma, and is therefore a narrow and exclusive body,

Resolved, That the West Middlesex Branch of the Theosophical Society in Europe, do withdraw its approval of, given without full knowledge of the facts, and declares to be utterly null and void the action taken by the majority at convention,

Resolved: That the West Middlesex Branch of the Theosophical Society in Europe do uphold the Constitution and Spirit of the Theosophical Society in Europe, and continue to work for Theosophy on the lines of H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge,

Resolved: That these resolutions be printed and that copies be sent to all Branches and Members of the Theosophical Society in Europe, inviting their co-operation.

ELIZA A. JEVONS, *President,*
R. A. V. MORRIS, *Secretary,*
DOUGLAS A. DOUGHARTY, *Treasurer.*

Sweden and Norway.—Excellent news reaches us from Norway and Sweden. The T. S. in Norway is almost unanimously in favor of autonomy, standing loyally by the old principles and platform of the T. S. In Sweden there is a compact minority, at present, who occupy the same position, but we rely upon the good sense of the Swedes to ensure the minority becoming a majority as soon as the real facts become known to the members and as soon as the personal coloring which has been given the issue there ceases to obscure the vitally important principles in question. Mere abuse of E. T. Hargrove is no argument, and the Swedes are not the people to be moved by abuse of an absent brother.

REVIEW.

As announced in our last issue, we have received an old friend in a new dress—*The English Theosophist,* edited and published by W. A. Bulmer. It is now a pamphlet about the size of THE FORUM of sixteen pages, but bears all its old stamp of virile, trenchant style, and honest, fearless expression of opinion. We

who remember the valiant service rendered by this little magazine to the cause of Brotherhood and Freedom, in defending Mr. Judge, have reason to hold it in affectionate esteem, and most heartily wish it every success in its present endeavours in the same direction.

Dr. Keightley in "The Theosophical Society in Europe" very succinctly states what that body is and always should be, saying that though the external forms may change, "the fundamental principles upon which the Society is based can never be ignored," and those principles he enumerates as—"Brotherhood, Tolerance, Autonomy, Self-Government, Freedom of discussion, Freedom from dogma or creed of any kind, Freedom from authority." Quotations and references to the *Path*, *Key to Theosophy*, etc., are given in confirmation. Dr. Hartmann's letter to the Convention T. S. A. is printed, and there are several short articles all having more or less application to the recent disturbances. On the last page are answers to correspondents, and a list of the loyal Lodges and Centres in England received to date. The subscription price is not stated, nor is the full address of the Editor given, which is a pity, as there are many members who would wish to subscribe immediately.

SETTING THINGS TO RIGHTS.

The FORUM has considered the question of affording opportunity in its columns for the refutation of scandalous stories which have been given publicity at so-called "E. S." gatherings and through other media, affecting the reputation of certain well-known persons, some of whom have been prominent in the Theosophical movement for many years, and has been obliged to decide not to do so for the following reasons among others.

First. The FORUM is the official organ of the Theosophical Society in America published by the Society for free circulation amongst its members. Its objects are to present brief discussions of the broad general problems of life from a theosophic standpoint, and to furnish information on current events concerning the Society as a whole. Hence it may not be allowed to become the vehicle of any personalities whatever.

Second. Its entire space of a whole year's issue would not provide sufficient room to deal with a tenth part of the material involved.

Third. The honorable character of the persons thus slandered is too well established in the world at large to be seriously affected by falsehoods arising at the sources from which these emanate.

Fourth. Lies, like chickens have a well ordained habit of coming home to roost, and the witness box of a New York law court is a rare place for bringing facts to light.

Fifth. Men and women who can be influenced by stories silly and improbable enough to incite the contempt of a commonplace school girl or who can be turned from old friendships and confidence by one-sided representation when the accused parties are not allowed to be present, have no proper place in the T. S. A.—they should never have joined it, are well out of it, and should not be encouraged to rejoin it.

Karma, the great law, assisted, where necessary, by the statutes of the State will take care of those personal matters without the aid of the FORUM, which has other work to do; and only a short time will be required to make all right again. Day by day the real Theosophists who have been surprised or carried away by impulse into momentary desertion are returning to their Alma Mater and reaffirming their allegiance to Free Thought, Free Speech, and Free Action within the law.

PLEDGES.

It is becoming apparent that some people are having an uncomfortable tussle with conscience in the matter of certain pledges they have taken or think

they have taken,which is close to the same thing. Information comes to the FORUM from various parts of the country of persons who express private disapproval of the recent Chicago Convention doings and a desire to remain with the old T. S. A. but who are withheld by the impression that they are pledged to the *personal* following of some alleged "Leader" or other. A pledge taken by a number of T. S. members between the years of 1889 and 1894 and which was recently made public *re* some New York law proceedings, by Mrs. Tingley the defendant in the suit, has in it a clause reading as follows:

"2. I pledge myself to support before the world the Theosophical movement, and in particular to answer and obey, without cavil or delay, all orders given me through the outer Heads of this School, in all that concerns my Theosophical duties and Esoteric work, *so far as I can do so without violating my positive obligations under the moral law and the laws of the land;* and I expressly agree that I may be expelled from the School and that the fact of such expulsion may be made known to its members, should I violate this pledge of obedience and secrecy." * [The italics are mine.]

Contrast the spirit of this with that of the third clause of a proposed pledge circulated for signatures since the Chicago Convention, which reads:

"3. I pledge myself *to support the present Outer Head, and the one she may appoint as her successor,* and in particular to obey, without cavil or delay, the orders of the Outer Head of this Lodge in *all that concerns my relation with this work for Universal Brotherhood.*" [Italics mine.]

Referring to the clause last quoted, why or how any one should be willing to subscribe to it, must remain a mystery to simpler minds, since the Roman Catholic Church freely offers storage for consciences equally fireproof and at lower rates. People of such mental calibre can surely find no resting place in the body of the T. S. A., for its fundamentals are of about as opposite a character to the import of such a pledge as can well be imagined. Theosophy tolerates no mental slaves nor moral handmaidens and provides no "Leaders" whose word is law on any subject.

Our friends who are uncertain where they stand will have to settle the issue each for himself. Let those who believe they have bound themselves hand and foot to the service, right or wrong of a "Leader" and his or her self-appointed successors, continue to carry this "old man of the sea" upon their shoulders for the balance of their lives. Let others who realize that a so-called pledge falsely made to their Higher Self and never accepted by that Higher Self, if they really honestly and soulfully so believe, wrench off from their necks the slimy arms of the monster and breathe again the air of freedom, a little weakened maybe, yet still unruined.

A. H. S.

THE SUPPORT OF T. S. A.

I am pleased to report that already a few members have taken action upon the suggestions made in last number of FORUM. The very first response came to me from the widow of W. Q. J. Let this example suffice to animate others. As we are now comparatively few, and our expenses just at this time unusally heavy, I ask that all those who intend contributing should make their intentions known at once, or as soon as possible. Payments need not be made at once. That can be adjusted to suit the convenience of subscribers. But it is very desirable that the Executive Committee should know what can be depended upon in this matter.

All communications on this subject should be addressed,

G. E. HARTER,
1607 North Main, Dayton, O.

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* Even this clause dignified and reasonable as it is, was withdrawn by Mr. Judge after he became sole Outer Head of the E. S. in November, 1894.